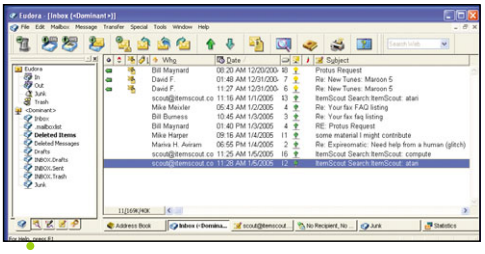
by Kevin Savetz

Eudora 6.2



Eudora 6.2
Free or $49.95 ($39.95 upgrade)
Qualcomm
www.eudora.com

Eudora has been around for years, evolving into a sturdy, capable email client. Beyond reading/sending mail, the multiplatform app (Windows 98 and later and Mac OS X) lets you effectively manage an onslaught of mail.

Version 6.2 adds ScamWatch to help detect phishing attempts, SSL email encryption, improved IMAP support, spell checking as you type, decent mail filtering, and more. There's also features of questionable use, such as graphical emoticons, a text summarizer, and a MoodWatch tool to warn you if you're about to send a potentially angry or offensive missive.

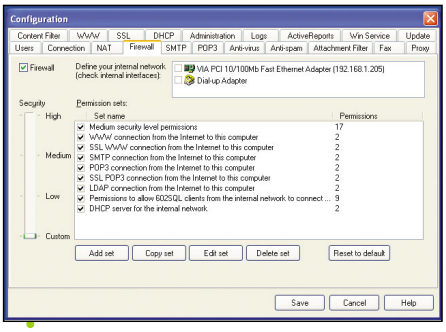
Although MoodWatch, ScamWatch, and the emoticons may appeal to less sophisticated email users, there are plenty of advanced features, including a wide variety of plug-ins, Kerberos authentication, and more configuration options than you can count. A Statistics page provides graphs related to your email habits, such as the number of sent messages and amount of spam received over time. SpamWatch is a boon for POP3 users, but it wouldn't work with our IMAP server, which lacked a required extension.

If the app's strong feature set is a result of its age, so is the program's biggest liability. The UI sometimes seems old and crusty, littered with tiny icons and menus that appear unchanged since they were introduced years ago. The problem is especially notable in the Mac OS version. If you've been using Eudora for long, version 6.2 will have a familiar comfort. For new users, the busy interface might be less approachable.

Eudora is commercial software, but it lets you find the right balance of features, ads, and price. The Paid mode delivers the complete feature set plus technical support for $49.95 ($39.95 upgrade). The Sponsored mode provides the same features except the junk mail filter, and the tech support is free in exchange for on-screen ads. The Light mode is free and lacks ads, but provides only a bare-bones set of features.

If you are shopping for a new email application, Eudora is certainly worth a look. The UI isn't perfect, but the power features and tools for newbies make it appealing. ▲

602 Software 602 LAN Suite 2004



602 LAN Suite 2004
Free, five users; additional features, $99.95 and up
602 Software
www.software602.com

If you've been dreading the thought of setting up the network for a growing business, 602 LAN Suite 2004 can reduce the daunting task to a pleasant afternoon. The software provides everything that a small business needs in a LAN—in fact, it has more than most will need.

The program lets you share a single connection (dial-up or broadband) with any number of computers on a LAN; complete with a firewall, POP3/SMTP email server, Web server, and many proxies (HTTP, FTP, Telnet, and SOCKS). There's also a fax server for sending/receiving faxes via a TAPI modem.

Mail services are significantly improved in this update. A Bayesian antispam filter was added to the mail server and an attachment filter can automatically strip files, with specified extensions, from all incoming mail. Users can fetch email using any POP3 email client (IMAP, frustratingly, isn't supported) or LAN Suite's Web mail interface. Web mail support is significantly improved in this version, adding a new Outlook-like look and folders to organize old mail.

Despite doing so much, LAN Suite is easy to set up. Configuration takes just a few minutes. Some of the application's text reads like it was written by someone for whom English wasn't a first language, but the program is intuitive and the documentation is adequate.

The program's five-user version is free for commercial or noncommercial use. More users or extra features will cost you, starting at $149.99 for 10 users. Various optional add-ons include an Anti-virus edition that can check incoming messages for viruses, a Web Content Filter that lets you limit employees' access to recreational Web sites, and an ActiveReports add-on that provides analysis of email, Web, NAT, and fax usage.

The app works with Windows 98/NT/Me/2000/XP/Server 2003, but it requires WinXP/2000/Server 2003 for the firewall and support for more than 10 users. LAN Suite is a versatile tool that takes the pain out of creating a secure and safe LAN for an office setting. ▲

CPU Ranking: 0 = Absolutely Worthless 2.5 = Absolutely Average 5 = Absolutely Perfect